

S 17528

Approved For Release 2001/03/04 : CIA-RDP80-01601R

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

October 11, 1972

Mr. GOLDWATER. Mr. President, some of the photographs of the protective weapons and the SAM sites may show nothing. However, the pilot says, "I was fired on." That is what it is all about.

Mr. PROXMIRE. That raises the question I was going to ask, whether we say that these photographs in the future should, on the basis of this experience, should be examined and examined with a idea of determining whether they reflect the orders given by the top authorities. And that question should be raised when we have a series of targets which appear to be unprotected and are hit time and time again. The commander should be alerted. It seems to me that General Abrams should have been alerted. And he was not alerted because of that.

Mr. GOLDWATER. The day is past when the Air Force is instructed as to what they can hit. However, I agree that the Senator from Wisconsin has a point when he assumes that the photographs go on up to headquarters. And we have not been there to sit in at an elegant briefing. I can understand the concern of the Senator. I am not trying to defend General Lavelle. I am just trying to answer a question concerning the matter raised by the Senator. They go by the word of the pilot as to whether he was fired on. And he says that he observed the fire to be such and such. The photographs did not have to show the target.

Mr. HUGHES. Mr. President, will the Senator from Wisconsin yield?

Mr. PROXMIRE. Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HUGHES. Mr. President, the question of the photographs came into my thinking a great deal in connection with the hearings.

Just recently a letter came to me from an airman who is still in the service. This man stated in the letter that he knew about at least one photograph that was removed from the intelligence files. And I do not know whether this is classified or not. So I will not say the source. However, it was at least a photograph of a target that was not on the list. That photograph was removed and not forwarded up. This did not come at a timely point to put this matter into the hearings. And also, the Senator from Iowa is not sure.

Mr. PROXMIRE. Mr. President, I think it was the letter that my office turned over to the Senator from Iowa, is that correct?

Mr. HUGHES. No. It was not.

Mr. PROXMIRE. That must have been another one.

Mr. HUGHES. It may have been another one. This is one of the matters involved. And I agree with the Senator from Wisconsin that we have a responsibility to investigate this matter and to go ahead with it, as I stated in my statement. The Senator from Iowa is not certain. Perhaps the Senator from Wisconsin can tell me from his staff research whether the photographs were separated.

As the Senator from Wisconsin will remember, I pointed out that there were at least 25,000 sorties flown during this period under the command of the Air

Force, and it only appears that 150 sorties involved unauthorized raids.

If one of these 150 photographs out of 25,000 came through without any identification—because many of these targets are in South Vietnam, in Laos, and some of them are even in Cambodia where there were few restrictions against the nature and type bombing—if that is true and they were not separated out, it would be difficult for anyone to identify the difference on a few missions. If they were separated, and I do not know this and during the course of the hearings I wish I could have put this question to someone.

Mr. PROXMIRE. It is my information they were not. They went directly up the chain of command and they were clearly identified as to time and place. As the Senator from Arizona pointed out, it is very confusing. Nevertheless, I understand this can be concealed once or twice, but to do it so often on 130 sorties where you would hit a number of targets that were not authorized should at least have raised suspicions in the mind of General Abrams.

Mr. HUGHES. I would like to point out that no member of that committee was looking harder for evidence of misdeed than was the Senator from Iowa.

Many of these targets, I believe, when they talk about trucks, POL's, and launcher carriers, and so forth, were in the two mountain passes. An attempt was being made to stop them before they crossed from Vietnam into Laos.

In one of those passes there was no question that, with the AAA installations, they could not fly a plane through there on a bet without a reaction. That is a legitimate question I raised time and time again, and I think there is evidence they hit illegal targets. I did not observe any evidence that I felt warranted that General Abrams could have possibly had this detected, but I only point out my concern.

Mr. PROXMIRE. At page 61 of the hearings Senator GOLDWATER asked this question of General Lavelle:

Didn't you send all recon photos of all strikes forward to Pacific Command at Headquarters here, so all commanders saw all recon strikes?

General LAVELLE. Yes, sir.

I do not know if that is the answer.

Mr. GOLDWATER. Mr. President, will the Senator yield so that I might explain that?

Mr. PROXMIRE. I yield.

Mr. GOLDWATER. I think it would be good for the record to explain how these photographs came about. They are not taken willy-nilly. In the case of a pure recon flight not involving unauthorized observation the intelligence unit at some level, usually at the command level, has reason to believe there might be a concentration of SAM's coming down Route 13 at such and such a coordinate. The intelligence is not active enough to verify it so a recon flight is ordered. It can be flown by a Navy plane or by an Air Force plane. If permissible, the aircraft flies at a relatively low altitude and it takes an exceedingly large number of photographs. On some of these recon flights they fly at mach .7 or .75, and

many, many negatives would be exposed in a matter of seconds. These photographs are then judged by recon photo intelligence officers and the best ones are sent up the road to the command intelligence staff. That is the origin of most recon photos.

In the case we are talking about where unauthorized strikes were involved, the recon aircraft were accompanied by tactical aircraft. There is nothing unusual about this. I might say, There has been a point made about accompanying tactical aircraft—4 to 8 to 16—and in World War II, probably twice as many tactical aircraft accompanied the flight. The flight has no protection. The operation is usually preplanned. They are sent out to take pictures of a certain area for intelligence.

On the return, the tactical pilots, because they had no ammunition or bombs, would verify in their report they had been struck. That is why the whole thing came about. Whether or not pictures were taken at the time is of small importance. They were reprimanded for not doing a better job, and even then the authority, CINCPAC, assumed that they had been fired on and the tactical aircraft returned it.

I wanted to make that clear as to how the photographs came about.

Mr. PROXMIRE. There are more unanswered questions about the operation. There is strategic reconnaissance. Not only did the operational photographs get to the Pacific Command, but there is a strategic reconnaissance as well.

The very high flying SR-71 planes routinely take photographs of Vietnam. They would catch on a regular basis any change in what happened on the ground. They would show what happened during air strikes, what was hit, and what specified targets were destroyed.

These photographs go to Washington, to the CIA, the DIA, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and others where they are intensively reviewed.

They would show very clearly that trucks, POL, supply depots, missile transporters, and other unauthorized targets were hit.

Therefore, this fact should have been known at the highest levels. Was it? If it was, why was not something done. If it was not, why was it not known? These questions remain unanswered.

Mr. GOLDWATER. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. PROXMIRE. I yield.

Mr. GOLDWATER. Very few SR-71 photographs are taken as far down in North Vietnam as the photographs we were talking about, but assuming they were, assuming an SR-71 had taken some at extremely high altitude, the review officer in Washington would assume they struck those targets because they had had a strike.

Mr. PROXMIRE. I understand that, but I thought the Senator from Iowa said in April and May when they began to take another course they could tell they were not unauthorized photographs. It was not stopped until the letter from Sergeant Franks to the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GOLDWATER. Once the question